



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting
April 9, 2019 6:00 P.M.
50 E. Civic Center Drive, Conference Room 300
Gilbert, Arizona 85296

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Presmyk, Chair
Robert Ferron, Vice Chair
Barbara Guy
Gilbert Honeycutt
Jennifer Jones
Matthew Roberts

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark LaPorte
Edward Madrid
Christopher Wharton

COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:

Vice Mayor Eddie Cook

STAFF PRESENT:

Robert Carmona, Parks and Recreation Director
John Kennedy, Parks and Recreation Manager
Rocky Brown, Parks and Recreation Business Manager
Dan Wilson, Cactus Yards
Rick Hooker, Project Manager
Marshall MacFarlane, Parks and Facilities Manager
Denise Merdon, Special Events, Marketing & Sponsorships

GUESTS PRESENT:

Sean Wozny, Kimley-Horn
Marc Taylor, Marc Taylor Inc.
Cecilia Chan, Gilbert Sun News

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Presmyk called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Denise Merdon called the roll and determined that a quorum was present.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS PRESENT:** Members of the public may comment on matters within the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Board, but not on the agenda. The Board's response is limited to responding to criticism, asking staff to review a matter commented upon, or asking that a matter be put on a future agenda.

There were no communications from citizens at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

5. **GILBERT LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT:**

Troy Reed is the Branch Manager for Southeast Regional Library and also oversees Perry Library. Currently the Perry Library has a vacancy for a branch manager and that position is expected to be filled by the end of May. Ms. Reed provided an overview for both branches for calendar year 2018.

PERRY LIBRARY

For 2018, the number of customers served was up by 4,700, and circulation went up by 17,000 items. There were over 40 additional programs, and program attendance was up by 2,500.

Summer Reading Program 2018 -The theme was Libraries Rock, and challenges and community experiences were offered for all ages. There was an increase in overall participation, although the completion rate was a little lower than the previous year. The Library partnered with Parks and Recreation and other local organizations to create experiences where customers can earn points and virtual badges for attending programs.

Perry Library Programming Highlights

- Storytime offered a variety of programs including All Ages, Toddler Time, Rock & Roll, Sensory Play, and Family Storytime.
- School-Age Programs - The very popular Magic Treehouse Book Club, STEAM Club, Curiosity Club, Battle of the Books, Pinkalicious Party, and Paws to Read.
- Teen Programs - Minute-to-Win-It, Game Day, Teen Bites, Teen Tech Week, Book Club of Awesomeness, Art Programs, and Teen Volunteers.
- Adult Programs - Fiction and Non-Fiction Book Groups, Film Programs, and Creative Writing. AARP Free Tax Help is offered every Saturday from January through mid-April. Escape Room Programs are offered free at the library and feature fun themes.
- Family Programs – Higley District Battle of the Books, 11th Annual Caroling in the Library partnering with Perry students, Global Village Outreach Event. The Punk Farm Puppet Show and Halloween Spooktacular were based on children's books.

Special Project – The Friends of the Library group sponsored a remodel of the Teen Room. The Perry Library opened in 2007. The project included new furniture, more seating and study areas for teens.

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL LIBRARY

In 2018, circulation increased by 60,000 items, and the number of customers was up by 65,000. There was a total of 719 volunteers for 6,229 hours. Programs brought in an additional 1,900 people over last year.

Summer Reading Program 2018 – The theme was Libraries Rock. Participation numbers were fairly even, although there was an increase in pre-readers and teens participating.

SERL Programming Highlights

- Storytime offered a variety of programs including Baby, Wee Ones, Preschool, Family, Baby & Daddy, Movement, and PJ Family Storytime.
- Toddler/Preschool Programs - StoryArt Lab, Baby Playdate, Imagination Station, Build & Play, Creative Space, and Little Braniacs.
- School-Age Programs - Lego Club, Kids Craft Club, Mythology Explorers, Tween Tinker Lab, and Self-Guided STEAM. Paws to Read features therapy dogs for ages 5-12.
- Teen Programs - Minute-to-Win-It, Learn to Draw, Crafter Hours, Writing Workshops with local authors, iRobot and STEM.
- Adult Programs - AARP Free Tax Help, Health Rhythms Drum Circle, Financial Literacy, Computer Puzzles, Genealogy, Color Me Relaxed, and Thursday Night Film Club.
- Family Programs – Global Village Outreach Event, Stay & Play, Pumpkin Ball, Citizen Science, and Backyard Wilderness. The award-winning Dogs with Jobs program features working dogs from different organizations including the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and Gilbert Search and Rescue.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Chair Presmyk stated it is always a pleasure to hear how well the libraries are being used and how well staff is programming for our residents. He appreciated all of the teen programs, especially at Perry High School.

6. CACTUS YARDS UPDATE:

Facility Renovations

John Kennedy noted that the facility had been closed down for a year and a half and a lot of renovation took place before the Cactus Yards opening on February 9, 2019. Before and after pictures showed the types of improvements done to the stadiums, field house, ball fields, and restaurants. At the entrance, a new color scheme, directional signage, and logo welcome people to the facility. The logo has been a gathering space for photo ops. There have been great comments on the condition of the fields with the new grass. Fresh paint and new aluminum panels with graphics updated the look of the stadiums. The Parks crew and CIP team have done a great job with all of the repairs and upgrades.

The Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation funded the renovation of the scoreboard at D-backs Field. Drainage issues at the dugouts have been fixed. The office space received new furnishings and paint. All of the concrete needed to be torn out and replaced throughout the facility. That project required 800 truckloads of cement. Our partner, Craft Culinary Concepts, invested \$250,000 for upgrades to the restaurants.

Opening Day - February 9, 2019

Over 3,500 attended. It was a cool, windy day. There was a variety of activities as well as pro appearances, and fireworks. Chair Les Presmyk and Board member Barbara Guy helped pass out commemorative baseballs. The Town of Gilbert team put in a lot of hard work to put the event together. There was extensive media coverage through local news channels and social media.

Tournaments

Since the facility opened in February through the end of March, there were six private promoter tournaments (one weekend was rained out). The facility is 90% booked for weekends in 2019. There are a few weekends open in the summer, although some time will be blocked out for field maintenance.

The 6 tournaments brought in about \$150,000 in revenue through field rentals, field prep fees and gate fees. Gate fees are only charged for weekend tournaments at \$5 per person; ages 15 and under are free as are Gilbert residents. Proceeds go into the Town's General Fund. The expenses will be provided on a year-end basis. There were about 43,000 attendees over the six tournament weekends, or almost 3,000 people per day. Staff is exploring options for people counters. There were teams representing 13 states and 2 Canadian Provinces.

Many of the tournaments held at Cactus Yards are part of larger tournaments which utilize up to seven sports complexes throughout the Valley. Cactus Yards hosted for certain age divisions. There were 331 teams that played tournaments only at Cactus Yards versus 1,076 teams overall.

About 145 teams, or about 48%, travelled and stayed overnight, with 1,044 nights at Gilbert hotels. Once the promoters become educated on Gilbert's new hotels, that number will go up. USSSA, United States Specialty Sports Association, uses a third-party hotel group for bookings and they provided us with detailed reports. The Economic Development Department is working with ASU on conducting a post-tournament survey of all of the teams.

Chair Presmyk noted that data would capture where everyone else stayed as well. When our Council has a conversation with the City of Mesa, they can leverage how much we are doing for them. That information should be provided to our Councilmembers and Mayor as talking points.

Programming

Dan Wilson reported on internal programming offered during the week. Adult sports had a total of 106 teams sign up and Youth sports programs had 784 participants, with \$130,000 in revenue in the first season.

Adult: Softball - 70 teams signed up. We added new options as well as an E division.
 Kickball - New sport for Gilbert, 8 teams signed up.
 Soccer - 28 teams including men's, women's, co-ed, upper division, and recreational leagues

Youth: Youth Ball - Over 600 kids participated with 4 options
 Sportsball - New offering at the indoor facility with 12 options
 Youth Soccer - 160 kids participated

As we started in late February, we lost almost two months of the year. Each season runs 6-8 weeks. Season two will start soon and numbers are expected to go up. Robert Carmona noted that we are just ramping up with staffing and the programming will ramp up as we get more recreation leaders and seasonal staff on board.

Batting Cages – Quite popular at \$1 for 20 pitches. The system takes quarters instead of tokens, and there has been \$4,000 in revenue already.

Sliders Sports Grill – Partnering with Craft Culinary Concepts on both restaurants and concessions. The Pretzels are the #1 selling item and they have hired two staff members just to make pretzels 8 hours a day. There are efforts working with Craft Culinary and Sliders to improve communication and learn to operate as one unit, as social media views Cactus Yards and everything within it as one facility.

Fine Tuning

Financial - For weekend tournament gate fees, it was expected that most people would pay with credit cards, although many paid with cash. We were not prepared with enough cash to make change and are working on a better solution.

Dugouts – We will be adding netting and padding to the railings for safety considerations.

Concessionaire – The hours have been based on our programming, which varies. We are working with Craft Culinary to develop more consistent schedules so that people will be familiar with their open hours.

Scoreboards – The controllers needed to be replaced and only 3 are working correctly now. There is some troubleshooting being done regarding the data cables.

Shade – Fans have been added and extra shade structures will be added to the stadium seating areas.

Staffing – We are still hiring and training staff. It is a struggle to get part-time seasonal employees. Robert Carmona noted it has been an issue all over Town with getting seasonal staff.

Feedback – Highlights from some of the feedback received:

“The fields were groomed to perfection.” “My expectations were well exceeded.”
“Very cool place for soccer and baseball practice and games.” “The restaurants ran smoothly.”
“...I really thought we would have the same experience as in the past attending Big League Dreams Park. I was wrong and regret not asking that all of our games be played at Cactus Yards.”
“Tournaments ran like a Swiss watch.” “The umpires did a great job.” “No more entrance fees.”
“Best venue for youth baseball in America.” “Took the former Big League Dreams and made it way better.”

Teams and clubs in the East Valley are excited about the facility as they don't have to travel to the west side.

John Kennedy advised that while the restaurants offer good quality food, they are not super fast. They have been a great partner in working through the issues.

Robert Carmona stated the revenue was right on track with the pro forma numbers and he felt we will do even better in years two and three. The expenses have been hard to track as there was a lot in start-up costs. As we start tracking for the programs and tournaments, we will have a better break down.

John Kennedy noted all of the work it takes to host tournaments. Our maintenance staff and field crews have to do 2, 3, or 4 field preps per day on the 8 fields. Some games are not over until 8 or 10 p.m., and crews are there very late cleaning up the facility to get ready for the next day's games starting at 8 a.m.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Matt Roberts asked if the issues related to the restaurant were internal to the restaurant or the public expressing frustrations?

Dan Wilson advised that the public is experiencing some difference in how things were run in the previous entity. We are working with Craft Culinary on those issues and to adjust the hours of operation as well as making sure the lines are shorter. Craft Culinary does not put out the standard hot dogs and nachos; they are making products fresh and that takes time. People were expecting a quick turnaround. We are working to educate the public on the better quality product so that they will understand that there may be a wait time.

Robert Carmona noted they have been overrun with people on the weekends and have adjusted their menu to have some items with quicker turnaround without sacrificing the quality of the food.

Chair Presmyk has some history with this facility and congratulated the Town and staff on everything that has been done to bring it back to its original vision and better. Keep up the good work.

Staff will provide updates every six months with some of the tracking numbers.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

7. **PARK UPDATES:** Rick Hooker, Town of Gilbert Project Manager for both Parks, introduced team members Sean Wozny of Kimley-Horn, Chad Atterbury of Dig Studios, and Marc Taylor, Project Manager/Construction Manager (PMCM) for both Park projects.

DESERT SKY PARK:

Sean Wozny, Kimley-Horn, provided a construction update. Desert Sky Park is within Rittenhouse Basin at Power and Pecos Roads. The team looked at the ultimate build-out of the site working with some user groups as well as the Parks Board. One of the biggest needs in the Town is multi-use fields. At full build out, there will be 16 multi-use fields, 3 restroom buildings, playground, irrigation lake, parking areas, dog park, and ramadas.

PHASE 1 – Currently under construction with 4 fields, some parking, the irrigation lake, a restroom building, playground area, ramada area, and maintenance yard. The construction utilized multiple GMPs due to timing and the permitting required.

GMP 1 was focused on the initial infrastructure. The utilities in Power Road are all Mesa utilities. Our utilities are coming from Pecos. We put in sewer, reclaimed and potable water, and fiber optic line between September and December, 2018. The utility project required boring underneath the Union Pacific Railroad track (UPRR) and cutting into the Rittenhouse drain to run the utilities through. When the Public Safety facility moves forward in July 2019, all of the utilities will be in place. The reclaimed water will come from a stub out at Pecos past the East Maricopa Floodway (EMF). Along Power, the SRP 69kV line was moved early in the project. The lake will utilize reclaimed water, and is sized to supply five days of water storage for the 16 fields at build out. The 1,500 SF restroom building has some storage and office space.

GMP 2 is focused on the irrigation, fields, turf areas, and finishing up the on-site utilities. The recovery well will provide back up for irrigation. All of the poles are up for the sports lighting. The newest Musco LED lighting is dramatically different with less glare and light pollution.

GMP 3 will focus on the amenities and some of the alternate options based on budgets. The Playground area will feature the Town's first FitCore Ninja Warrior-style elements to provide different fitness opportunities. The high canopies will incorporate shade elements. There will be a play structure and disc swings for the younger kids.

Key Dates - The irrigation work will start in April through May. The fields will be sand-based and construction will start in May-June. Sprinklers are scheduled for July followed by the sod. The turf will have time to get established in August through September. Opening is expected around October 7, 2019.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

How is the bottom of the lake lined? The lake liner just submitted to the Town is an HDPE polyethylene type of material and has up to a 30-year life. Staff is still looking at some other applications.

How do the sand-based fields compare to what is at the basin at Discovery Park, which is currently dirt? Will it grow healthier turf? The sand-based fields will allow for drainage and aeration in and under the turf, allowing it to breathe. The native soil gets compacted. There was some value engineering to use a native soil profile in non-field play areas. Otherwise, the 110 acres would require a lot of sand and would be very expensive. The sand allows for better durability, playability, and maintenance. It will not look like the fields at Discovery. There will be some different maintenance practices and recovery periods.

Rick Hooker noted that we brought in the utilities for the Public Safety Training Center. They did pay us back for that which allowed for 4 fields initially instead of 2.

Robert Ferron noted as a field user at Crossroads and Discovery, if a game goes into overtime and the lights shut off, they take 15 to 20 minutes to come back on. The LED lights will come on almost instantly and it will make a huge difference.

GILBERT REGIONAL PARK:

Chad Atterbury, Project Manager, Dig Studios, provided an update. He last presented to the Parks Board at the end of the master planning process to develop the first 54 acres of the full 250-acre Regional Park. The 54-acre high and dry area was divided into Phase 1 and Phase 1B. Some of the GMPs will be done concurrently.

PHASE 1 – Multiple GMPs were used with the mass grading and utility work, which began in the fall of 2018 and is still in progress. Phase 1 also includes the play area, splash pad, entry road and 2 parking areas.

GMP 2 - Focused on a large play area, splash pad, restrooms, ramadas and park area leading to the future lake.

Construction Update – Most of the utilities connect to Queen Creek. The reclaimed water line connects to a stub-out in Higley Road to the east. The mass grading in GMP 1 is focused on the play area. The underground work is currently going on for the major utilities, storm drains, water lines, and irrigation. The 12-stall restroom is underway and will include park facilities and pump room for the splash pad.

The splash pad will be of a regional scale at over 4,000 SF with over 50 water features, surrounded by a slope with grass or artificial turf, and shaded seating areas. There will be a 4-foot elevation change between the splash pad and the surrounding areas. The Creek is a tot play area and construction is well under way beginning with the storm drains and underground work. The Mountain will have accessible routes to all 4 levels with a pedestrian bridge. The 17-foot Mountain features a 17-foot play structure on top, with multi-level slides. Construction is underway with the grading, terraces, and retaining walls.

Phase 1B is set to begin construction immediately after Phase 1 is complete. Phase 1B will focus on 16 pickleball courts, 8 tennis courts, 6 sand volleyball courts, and the 10-acre event lawn. The bottom 5 acres of the event lawn are focused toward a large performance plaza and pavilion structure. The pavilion will be a two-sided structure with the event lawn to the north and the lake to the south. A large group ramada will have dock space to the lake. The lake will serve as the irrigation for Phase 1, 1B, and all future phases.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Where is the water coming from for the lake? There are multiple sources. The reclaimed will be the primary source of water for all irrigation. There is also a small recovery well in Phase 1 and a secondary well in Phase 1B as a backup.

Will the lake be stocked? Yes, the lake will be stocked as part of the community fishing program.

Will the Parks Board be able to get a tour before the Park opens? Robert Carmona is looking at possible dates for a Board tour a few days before the opening for each of the parks, to be sure that everything is safe and ready to go. They are also looking at doing a test pilot with kids at both parks.

Are the 16 pickleball and 8 tennis courts more than what was in the original plan and will they all be lighted?

All of the courts will be lit. The original plan was for those to be phased. Dividing it into Phase 1 and 1B allowed for those elements to come online at the same time. There is also a parking area along that side of the entry road. There is the potential to draw tournaments.

Robert Carmona advised that the original phase 1 plan called for 4 pickleball and 2 tennis courts and would have required adding pieces into the playground in Phase 1B. The phasing was reconfigured to have all elements of the playground and splash pad completed in Phase 1. That allowed us to do the court area all in one shot. For construction costs and mobilization, this was a better phasing option. There are already pickleball groups reaching out to the Town weekly.

Barbara Guy plays with the Trilogy crew and noted they are all over having pickleball at the Regional Park. They now go to Ahwatukee or Glendale.

Robert Carmona thanked Sean Wozny, Rick Hooker, Chad Atterbury, and Marc Taylor. Tackling both of these projects at the same time is quite a task, both are expected to be completed on-time and the team has been nothing but professional.

AGENDA ITEMS

- 8. PARK OPENINGS & CELEBRATION COMMITTEES:** Robert Carmona explained how Parks and Recreation staff came together as a team to plan the grand opening of Cactus Yards and make it a festive event. Several committees have been developed within the department to handle the two upcoming Park openings. Between September and early October, we will hold the Gilbert Regional Park grand opening, Desert Sky Park grand opening, and the Riparian Preserve 20th Anniversary and the Library 20th Anniversary Events. The goal is to open it up to the Parks Board to see if there is interest in serving on these committees and help plan the festivities.

IMPORTANT DATES: Gilbert Regional Park Grand Opening September 21, 2019

Desert Sky Park Grand Opening - the week of October 7, 2019

The Riparian/Library Anniversary - the week of October 14, 2019.

The Library actually opened in April, although the Anniversary event was delayed to coincide with the Riparian Preserve event and to better manage staff time as April is a very busy time.

Several Board members were interested in taking part in the committees as follows:

Matt Robertson – Desert Sky Park

Robert Ferron – Desert Sky Park and/or Gilbert Regional Park

Gil Honeycutt – Gilbert Regional Park

Les Presmyk – Riparian/Library 20th Anniversary

The entire Parks and Recreation team is excited about these events. Robert has received an e-mail from a part-time recreation leader with ideas for each of the events. Once the committees are complete and captains are

assigned, they will reach out to Board members with more details after April 15. Board members can e-mail Robert Carmona if they are interested in being part of a committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

9. MINUTES-Consider Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2019:

MOTION: Robert Ferron moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 12, 2019; seconded by Barbara Guy. The Motion passed 6-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

10. REPORT FROM CHAIR: Chair Presmyk noted Easter is coming up and he hoped everyone would be safe as they celebrate the Holiday.

11. REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS / FOUNDATION LIAISON:

Barbara Guy was a vendor at a few Parks and Recreation events. From a vendor's perspective, she was very impressed with Denise Merdon and her team. They are amazing and have everything down like clockwork. They made it super easy as a vendor to be at the events.

Vice Chair Robert Ferron reported on lighting the Water Tower blue and yellow on behalf of Sharing Down Syndrome Arizona. It was a fun event and about 150-200 people attended. The Water Tower was also recently lit in honor of National Autism Awareness Day on April 2.

He also reported on the field conditions at Discovery. It takes triple the amount of paint for it to stay on and that can be a big expense. Marshall MacFarlane will reach out to the team on that.

Requests for future agenda items:

- Update on Mini Golf
- Field maintenance, maintenance scheduling, and report on condition of all fields, especially Soccer
- Update on the Hockey amenity at Cactus Yards

12. REPORT FROM COUNCIL LIAISON: Vice Mayor Cook reported on a new restaurant opening, Culinary Dropout. The new parking garage has opened as well. The Town to close down the dirt lot by Burger King for construction of a large project within the next 12 months. There are plans for some office buildings, mixed-use, parking garage, and hotel. The final design work will be done over the next few months.

Councilmember Cook noted that the Topo gopher lights have changed to red. Joe Johnston is quite creative. The concept is reminiscent of Route 66 icons.

Chair Presmyk remembered when the Town was approving Joe's Real BBQ, there was discussion on the neon sign and whether it fit in the downtown. He wished he could have been there for the discussion on the gopher. He thought it was cute and will help to bring people downtown.

13. REPORT FROM STAFF LIAISONS:

Robert Carmona advised that Marshall MacFarlane will have some items for the Parks Board over the next few months as we focus on facilities and parks management through the LRIP.

John Kennedy reported on the upcoming Movie in the Park on April 26 at the Gilbert Community Center featuring Smallfoot.

The 17th Annual Earth and Arbor Day Celebration will be held April 17 from 10 a.m. to noon at the McQueen Park Activity Center with tree planting, vendors, crafts, and activities.

Rocky Brown reported on the April Pools Day event April 27 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mesquite Pool partnering with the Fire Department on water safety.

Rocky also reported that Linda Ayres, Administrative Support Supervisor, has accepted a position with the Town of Fountain Hills as their Recreation Manager. Her last day with the Town of Gilbert will be April 18. She will be missed. The Parks Board sends her their best wishes.

Rocky reported on the Coyotes Hockey proposal. The pricing on the concrete pad was high and the Coyotes approached the NHL with the issue of the gap in funding. The NHL asked for budget information from Gilbert and they are considering funding the difference. There are internal Town discussions on what we could budget for that. The Coyotes and the NHL are very interested in Gilbert and they are bringing even more to the table than the initial proposal. He will keep the Board updated.

Robert Carmona will report next month regarding a pickleball proposal at Freestone for Board discussion and feedback.

Denise Merdon reported that the Town received 17 applications (2 incumbents) for the Parks Board. Next month we should have some new folks on the Board.

14. UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Concerts in the Park, Thursdays, April 11 and 25 and May 9 and 23. Free event with live music, food trucks and the splash pad.

CONCLUSION

15. ADJOURN: Les Presmyk adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

Les Presmyk, Chair

Denise Merdon, Staff Liaison